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PP RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH RUEHTRO
DE RUEHGO #0384/01 1360713
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 150713Z MAY 08
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7605
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1194
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4738
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 8282
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5844
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 3713
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1616
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 RANGOON 000384

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR USAID/OFDA, EAP/MLS, S/ES-O-CMS, DS/CC AND
DS/IP/EAP; PACOM FOR LTC JAMIE MCADEN; BANGKOK FOR RSO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA: CYCLONE NARGIS SITREP NO. 9

REF: RANGOON 376 AND PREVIOUS

SUMMARY

1. (SBU) EMBASSY OPERATIONS: Embassy Rangoon operated on city power and had full diesel fuel tanks. The EAC reviewed post's authorized departure and will recommend that the Department extend it, subject to another review in ten days. All Amcit welfare and whereabouts inquiries have been resolved. No criminal incidents involving American staff were reported.

2. (SBU) U.S. RELIEF FLIGHTS: Five C-130 relief flights were scheduled to arrive at Rangoon International Airport on May 15. Five more relief flights are scheduled to arrive on May 16, including two consigned to NGOs.

3. (SBU) SITUATION ON THE GROUND: The UN confirmed it had received a letter from the GOB stating that they will permit 160 relief workers from China, Bangladesh, India, and Thailand to enter Burma. The UN is seeking to work out the details with the GOB and these four countries. Estimates of dead and missing ranged from a low of 38,491 (GOB) to a high of 127,990 (Red Cross). On May 9, the UN estimated as many as 102,000 died and 220,000 were missing. According to the UN and several NGOs in the area, large numbers of people have been migrating away from the most affected areas in search of care and basic necessities. The UN reported more aid continued to reach victims, but said much more was needed.

4. (SBU) The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) told us that their country director Marcel Wagner was misquoted in a May 15 New York Times article alleging the theft of relief supplies. According to ADRA, Wagner, who is not fluent in English, did not tell the reporter that relief supplies were being misdirected. ADRA told us that none of their aid has been diverted by the GOB and does not believe that the diversion of aid is a growing problem. ADRA also said none of their staff have been denied travel permits.

EMBASSY OPERATIONS

5. (SBU) STAFFING AND OPERATIONS: Embassy Rangoon operated

on its normal 0800-1630 schedule subject to a liberal leave policy. Other than those on regularly scheduled leave, a full complement of local employees reported for work.

¶6. (SBU) CONSULAR: Consular has accounted for all welfare and whereabouts inquiries regarding Amcits in Burma.

¶7. (SBU) AUTHORIZED DEPARTURE: Embassy Rangoon's EAC met on May 15 and decided to recommend the Department extend post's authorized departure, subject to another review in ten days. All EFMs who asked to depart are in Bangkok and plan to remain there for at least the next ten days.

¶8. (SBU) FUEL AND POWER: The Embassy operated on city power and had full diesel storage tanks. We received a high octane delivery today, May 15.

¶9. (SBU) WATER: The Embassy continued to have adequate water supplies and purification capacity on hand.

¶10. (SBU) SECURITY: No criminal incidents involving American staff were reported.

U.S. RELIEF FLIGHTS

¶11. (SBU) Five C-130 relief flights were scheduled to arrive at Rangoon International Airport on May 15. The first arrived at 0845 hrs, the second arrived at 1005 hrs, and the third arrived at 1055 hrs Rangoon time. The remaining two were scheduled to arrive at 1411 and 1511 hrs respectively.

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Five more relief flights are scheduled to arrive on May 16, including two consigned to NGOs.

¶12. (SBU) The GOB's New Light of Myanmar newspaper continued to publish detailed accounts of the receipt and distribution of relief supplies.

SITUATION ON THE GROUND

¶13. (SBU) CASUALTIES AND DAMAGE: As of May 14, the GOB's official death toll was 38,491 dead and 27,838 missing. The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies estimated the number of dead was between 68,833 and 127,990. On May 9, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), estimated the cyclone killed between 60,000 and 102,000 persons and that 220,000 were missing. Additionally, OCHA estimate between 1.6 and 2.5 million persons have been severely affected by the cyclone.

¶14. (SBU) According to the UN and several NGOs in the area, large numbers of people have begun migrating away from the most affected areas in search of care and basic necessities. Initial estimates the UN has received suggest that temporary settlements may now shelter over 550,000 people in Irrawaddy and Rangoon divisions. The UN and NGOs operating in the affected area continued to conduct disease surveillance. While no outbreaks of cholera had been reported, our contacts stressed that health conditions in the affected areas were poor and incidents of diarrheal disease, respiratory infections, and untreated traumatic injuries remained high.

¶15. (SBU) RECOVERY AND RELIEF: The UN confirmed it had received a letter from the GOB stating that they will permit 160 relief workers from China, Bangladesh, India, and Thailand to enter Burma. The letter did not specify whether these workers could be employees of the UN or private aid agencies, and did not discuss where they could travel once inside Burma. The UN will meet with the Chinese, Bangladeshi, Indian, and Thai embassies to discuss and coordinate logistics. Embassy recommends contacting these nations to see how we might work through them.

¶16. (SBU) According to OCHA, as of May 13, the UN and other aid agencies were conducting assessments in 58 townships in Irrawaddy and Rangoon divisions. The UN reported the GOB and humanitarian partners had reached an increasing number of affected persons, but that the level of aid getting into the country was still below what was needed.

¶17. (SBU) An expatriate official at the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) told us that ADRA's country director Marcel Wagner was misquoted in a May 15 New York Times article alleging the theft of relief supplies. According to ADRA, Wagner did not tell the reporter that relief supplies were being misdirected, and speculated the mistake may be due to the fact that Wagner conducted the interview in English, a language he is not fluent in. ADRA went on record with us to say that none of their aid has been diverted by the GOB and does not believe that the diversion of aid is a growing problem. ADRA also reported that none of their aid workers had been denied travel permits and that all of their visa requests have been approved.

¶18. (SBU) FUEL: Fuel prices in Rangoon remained stable.

¶19. (SBU) FOOD AND WATER: Food in Rangoon was still expensive, especially meat and rice. Shortages in the delta continued.

¶20. (SBU) ELECTRICITY: Power was restored to more neighborhoods in Rangoon, but much of the city, and most of the delta was without city power.

¶21. (SBU) LAW AND ORDER: We received no reports of widespread looting or public disturbances in or around

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Rangoon.
VILLAROSA